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UNCLAS KUWAIT 000217

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION KUWAIT

1. Summary: All columnists condemned the January 10 terrorist act that left two Kuwaiti security officers and one terrorist dead. Many commentators faulted the government. One writer cited "loopholes in our laws" and another blamed it for having disregarded "warning signs." Another directed a withering attack on the government accusing it of "raising these terrorists in schools and mosques" in an environment ripe for breeding terrorists. End Summary.

2. Liberal columnist Ahmad Al-Dayin writing in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam opined (01/12): "It is wrong to accuse Islam alone of being the sole source of fanaticism, extremism, and terrorism. Fundamentalism exists in Judaism and in Christianity, most notably the United States' right-wing Christian Zionists, and in the Hindu religion."

3. Pro-government columnist Faisal Al-Qenai of independent Al-Seyassah said (01/12): "This type of criminal who looks for victims at random registers the extent of their evil intentions. After Monday's bloody events, it is incumbent upon us to reevaluate and examine the loopholes in our laws and legislation exploited by these terrorists and all who sympathize with their actions."

4. Liberal columnist Dr. Shanlan Al-Issa of independent Al-Seyassah wrote (01/12): "This cowardly terrorist operation establishes what many in Kuwait have already realized: Kuwait has become an incubator and a suitable environment for breeding and spreading terrorism. ...The government...has ignored the firm ties between religious movements in Kuwait and Saudi...If the government is serious about combating terrorism, it must open up to other political affiliations. Attempting to please political Islamist movements at the expense of citizens' freedoms and their constitutional rights will not be of any use."

5. Regular columnist Saleh Al-Shayji of independent Al-Anba wrote (01/12): "The black car of death roaming our streets (a reference to the Embassy's warden message) should move us to stop praising the government and extolling the virtue of its justice, wisdom, and guidance. It is the government that must bear most of the responsibility for that crime. It is the government that raised these criminals and terrorists in its schools, mosques, and media and in religious associations, granting them licenses to breed and implant the culture of violence...."

LeBaron